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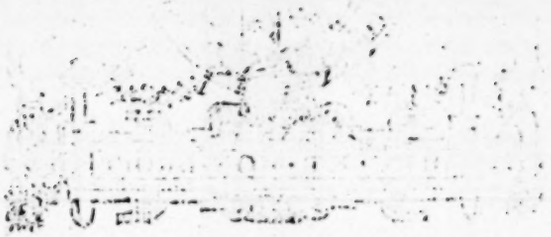
¶ By the King.

A Proclamation for preuenting the decayes of Churches and Chappels for the time to come.

THe Kings moſt Excellent MAIESTIE hauing of late taken ſpecial notice of the generall decayes and ruines of Pariſh Churches and Chappels in many parts of this Kingdome, and that by Law the ſame ought to be repaired and maintained from time to time, at the proper charge of the inhabitants and occupiers of Lands within thoſe Pariſhes and Chappelries reſpectiuely. Who being altogether careleſſe of their duties therein, haue in many places wilfully neglected the ſame, when with a little charge ſeaſonably beſtowed in time, they might eaſily preuent thoſe great ruines, which afterwards grow more heauy to be ſupported by their owne defaults, and ſometimes thoſe Churches and Chappels are by them purpoſely ſuffered to runne into ſuch extreame ruine and decay out of hope to obtaine ſome generall Collection, whereby to ſpare themſelues, and to get the worke, which they are bound to doe by law, to be done by the common purſe of others, ſuch Collections hauing beene of late yeeres more frequently granted then heretofore.

His Maieſtie therefore taking this matter into his Princely conſideration, and holding it a great diſhonour to our Chriſtian profeſſion, that the conſecrated places of Gods worſhip and Diuine Seruice are no better looked vnto, doth by this his Proclamation ſtraitly charge and command all Archbiſhops, Biſhops, Archdeacons, and others to whom it may appertaine, That they take ſpeciall care, each of them within his owne limits and Juriſdiction, that this point of keeping and vpholding the Churches and Chappels from time to time, in good, decent, and ſubſtantiall repaire, be exactly and duely performed, and therein not to rely vpon the



Churchwardens Presentments, who to saue themselues and their neighbours from charge, will easily omit to make knowen the decayes of their Churches and their owne defaults, but either by themselues in person, or by their Officials, or other persons of worth and trust, to take view and survey of the Churches and Chappels within their severall Jurisdictions, and where they finde ought amisse, to cause the same to be speedily and carefully amended, and to limit and appoint set dayes for the doing thereof, that no needfull Worke be deferred too long, and to vse the power of the Ecclesiasticall Courts for putting the same in due execution. Willing and requiring also all his Maiesties Judges of the Common Law, to be very carefull and wary, that in these cases which concerne the repaire of Churches and Chappels according to this his Maiesties Princely care, and Royall commandement, the good Worke undertaken in the Ecclesiasticall Courts bee not interrupted, by their too easie granting of Prohibitions, which, as with other cases, so especially in this, would not be granted, but vpon weighty and great cause, and vpon strict and due examination.

And to take away from the said Inhabitants and Land-holders of Parishes, the hope which they haue heretofore had to relieue themselues by publique Collections, as also to prevent the causelesse burthening of his louing Subiects, not lyable by the Law to the said reparations, His Maiestie hereby doeth further charge and command the Lord Keeper of the Great Seale of England, that from henceforth no Letters Patents be granted, nor suffered to passe the Seale for any Collection for the repayring or new building of any Churches or Chappels, or the Steeples of the same, excepting onely in case of casualtie by fire, or extraordinarie violence of Tempest, whereby the said Churches, Chappels, or Steeples, are suddenly, without the Parishioners default, so greatly decayed, as the Inhabitants and Land-holders are not able without helpe of others, to repayre or new build the same.

All which his Maiestie doth will and command to bee from henceforth duely and strictly obserued, aswel by the said Lord Keeper for his part, as by the said Archbishops, Bishops, Judges, and others for their parts, as they tender His Maiesties good pleasure and Royall Commandement, that the great inconuenience, and dishonour of suffering the houses of Gods Worship and seruice, to run into ruine and decay amongst vs, may be hereafter carefully preuented.

Giuen at his Maiesties Honour of Hampton Court the eleuenth day of October, in the fift yeere of His Reigne, of Great Britaine, France, and Ireland.

God saue the King.

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